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ABSTRACT

Transcripts of weekly programs broadcast by National Public Radio on bilingual education are presented with Wendy Blair and John Merrow. Contents are as follows: (1) Introduction; (2) "History of Bilingual Education" by Noel Epstein; (3) "Passamaquoddy Language Instruction in Maine" with Wayne Newall, Robert Leavitt, and Anna Arnois; (4) "Are Only Transitional Bilingual Programs the Answer" with Jose Cardenas; (5) "Bilingual Programs in South Philadelphia High School: with Binh Tham and Sung Choi; (6) "The American Institutes for Research Study" with Noel Epstein and Michael O'Malley; (7) "Why Bilingual Programs Are Not Successful" with Jose Cardenas; (8) "Bilingual Programs in New England" with Lucile Parchick; (9) "Bilingual Programs in Wisconsin" with Louise Strasbaugh and Nelia Olivencia; (10) "Bilingual Programs in California"; (11) "Noel Epstein Versus D. Jose Cardenas"; and (12) "Have Bilingual Education Programs Become Political?" by Noel Epstein. (SW)

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OPTIONS IN EDUCATION

PROGRAM TRANSCRIPTS OF
A WEEKLY SERIES BROADCAST BY
MEMBER STATIONS OF
NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Program No. 98: "BILINGUAL EDUCATION"

November 14, 1977

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION:	1-2
HISTORY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION - Noel Epstein, author of Language, Ethnicity and the Schools	2-3
PASSAMAQUODDY LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN MAINE - Wayne Newall, native Passamaquoddy teacher; Robert Leavitt, Materials and Curriculum Developer for the Passamaquoddy school; Anna Arnois, native Passamaquoddy teacher	3-6
ARE ONLY TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS THE ANSWER - Dr. Jose Cardenas, Director of the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio, Texas	6-7
BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN SOUTH PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL - Binh Tham, Coordinator for the bilingual program at South Philadelphia High School; Sung Choi, teaches Korean at South Philadelphia High School	7-8
THE AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH STUDY - Noel Epstein, author of Language, Ethnicity and the Schools; Michael O'Malley, Acting Director of the Multi-Cultural Bilingual Division of the National Institute of Education	8-9
WHY BILINGUAL PROGRAMS ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL - Dr. Jose Cardenas, Director of the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio, Texas	10
BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN NEW ENGLAND - Lucile Parchick, teacher in Springfield, Massachusetts; students from Springfield, Mass.	11-13
BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN WISCONSIN -	13-14
BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN CALIFORNIA - Patricia teacher; Rosemary teacher; Cathy teacher	15-16
NOEL EPSTEIN VERSUS DR. JOSE CARDENAS	16-17
HAVE BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS BECOME POLITICAL? - Noel Epstein, author of Language, Ethnicity and the Schools	17-19

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"BILINGUAL EDUCATION"

BLAIR: I'm Wendy Blair.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this week only let's rename our program.

BLAIR: Ok! Instead of calling it OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, let's call it OPTIONS IN BILINGUAL EDUCATION.

MERROW: Bilingual education means that kids whose first language is not English go to a school where some basic subjects like math and social studies are taught in their native language, and they're also learning English at the same time.

BLAIR: Once they master English, they'll do better in school. They won't drop out. And once they graduate, they'll get jobs.

MERROW: That's the theory, anyway. Today, after ten years and half a billion dollars, have federal bilingual programs accomplished anything?

* * *

WOMAN: I think we are seeing that children who are now in the bilingual program are expressing a desire to stay in school, they want a better education. You know, they don't want to leave when they're 16 to get a job in a shop. We're seeing more that are going on to high school.

NEWALL: There are parents that, of course, through indoctrination, believe that you can't get any kind of knowledge, or any kind of decent education unless it's in English. We don't happen to believe that and the majority of the community happens to support bilingual and bi-cultural approaches to education.

EPSTEIN: I am outraged, quite frankly, by the authoritarian attitude and the intolerance of leaders of the bilingual movement.

MAN: The student body would, in turn, get to know these people a lot better, get to know their culture, and their past, and possibly their history as well. And that way, hopefully, they would acquire more respect for a culture that is a guest culture within this larger Anglo-Saxon segment.

EPSTEIN: The problem, largely has been poverty, rather than language.

BLAIR: You'll hear from those advocates and critics later in the program, but let's go back to the beginning of federal involvement.

MERROW: It started with a problem: too many kids being poorly served by the schools, and in turn doing poorly in school. About three and a half million young people, for whom English was not their dominant language, if

they spoke English at all. About half of them dropped out of school before graduation.

BLAIR: The federal response was an amendment in 1968 to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as Title VII. It created what's called a "Demonstration Program."

MERROW: Keep that term in mind-"demonstration." The idea was to use federal money to demonstrate bilingual education, and how it might help students learn English and help keep them in school. Where it proved effective, the feds hoped, the states and cities would adopt their own programs, and pay for them themselves. The federal government never intended to pay for programs for all three and a half million students whose native language is not English. It just wanted to start up a few hundred programs to find out whether they worked.

BLAIR: Today, "demonstration" is an issue, but there are other issues too: civil rights questions involving a Supreme Court decision, a potential conflict between desegregation and bilingual education; and a number of evaluations of bilingual education that questioned whether it makes any difference.

MERROW: These issues are in the spotlight now, largely because of a new book: Lanugage, Ethnicity and the Schools, by Noel Epstein, a reporter for the Washington Post.

BLAIR: Epstein's book questions whether bilingual education is supposed to be transitional--that is to teach English so students whose first language is not English can move into regular classrooms as quickly as possible--or maintenance -- that is to teach both languages, and thereby maintain the original language and culture, and not put them aside in favor of English.

MERROW: I talked with Noel Epstein recently about the history of bilingual education, and about transition versus maintenance.

HISTORY OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

EPSTEIN: The legislation, originally, was written very vaguely, and those in the United States' Office of Education who are implementing the legislation concentrated overwhelmingly on a technique that's technically called "Transitional Bilingual Education." The idea of this technique is to teach children, temporarily, subject matters -- English, math, I mean language, math, science, or whatever subjects -- in their native language, in the hope that they'll keep up with subject matter while they're also being taught English as a second language; so that at some point, they will transit into English classrooms with other English students.

MERROW: At some point they'll make the transition, they'll begin learning history, science, etc., in English. Ok.

EPSTEIN: That was the intent of the, of the administrators at the Office of Education, and it was clearly the intent of the Congress.

MERROW: Was it clearly the intent? You said it was written vaguely.

EPSTEIN: All right. Well, I'll clarify that. When the law was originally written, it was a wide-open law; it was an experimental law that allowed many things to be done. But the concern of the legislators clearly was the limited English ability and the poor achievement of the students; the concern of the legislators was not with maintaining the student's ability on

an equal status with English in the native language. However, from the outset, many people within the bilingual movement wanted to make the law deliberately vague enough so that it wouldn't specifically forbid maintenance programs from being financed by the federal government.

MERROW: Now, what's a maintenance program?

EPSTEIN: Now, a maintenance program is designed to maintain the student's proficiency in the native language, while the student's also learning English. It is not -- and I would like to emphasize this -- a maintenance program is NOT a rejection of English.

MERROW: It says it's a bi-, it's two. Right?

EPSTEIN: It's trying to give -- and I hate to, you know, place a specific degree of importance to this -- but a roughly equal importance on the native language, and also on the native culture. That's been incorporated into it.

BLAIR: Noel Epstein of the Washington Post, author of Language, Ethnicity, and the Schools. More from him later.

MERROW: It isn't necessarily "Either-or." Maintenance bilingual programs don't have to reject English: they're designed to support the original language and culture, whatever it is.

BLAIR: In fact, most bilingual education is in Spanish: about 80% of the 260,000 students in federally supported programs are of Hispanic origin.

MERROW: In all, however, the Federal Bilingual Education Program has projects in 46 different languages.

BLAIR: Whether these are transition, or maintenance projects isn't always easy to tell, but there's no question about what's going on in Peter Dana Point, Maine, near the Canadian border.

PASSAMAQUODDY LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN MAINE

STUDENTS: (Reading in the Passamaquoddy Language).

LEGERE: Those are young Passamaquoddy Indian children, and their teacher Anna Arnois. . They are learning to read in their native tongue at a tiny school on a reservation at Peter Dana Point, a few miles from the Canadian border in eastern Maine. For years, the Catholic Church ran the schools on the reservation. The Sisters taught the classes only in English, even though many of the children spoke only Passamaquoddy. That, plus increasing contact with the outside white world threatened to kill the Passamaquoddy language, and make the culture extinct. But all that has been changing in the past ten years: the Indians gained control over their own school board, and now the state -- not the church -- funds the school program. Some of the Catholic Sisters remain, but now native Passamaquoddies teach at the school too. One of them is Wayne Newall, who six years ago, started the Wabanaki bilingual education program.

NEWALL: First of all, we tried to instruct in both English and the native language, in this case it's the Passamaquoddy Indian language. We tried to offer this in all subject areas except for mathematics. The other thing that we try to offer in the school curriculum is a cultural awareness and cultural practice type of a curriculum, i.e., dancing and singing in the native tongue, some other things associated with cultural crafts, and of heavy

emphasis on our environment here. Those are the kinds of things we interweave into the so-called "basic three's," reading, writing and arithmetic.

LEGERE: But before this program, were all the classes being taught in English, forcing children to study in English?

NEWALL: Yes. Most...there was nothing at all in terms of either in language offering in the native tongue, or in cultural offering relating to the native culture. And basically, it was an outside educational force that was at work on the reservation for about a hundred years.

LEGERE: The program is federally funded through Title VII, monies designated for development of a native curriculum, and for training of native people as teachers. Robert Leavitt is the Materials and Curriculum Developer for the school. He says pulling together written materials has been the hardest part of the program. Except for a few attempts by missionaries in the 18th and 19th Century, the Passamaquoddy Language has never been written.

LEAVITT: One of the main difficulties was that there was...when the program began, there were no materials written in Passamaquoddy, or really does any materials at all designed specifically for Passamaquoddy children in school. So what we have done has been to produce a lot of written materials and a lot of pictorial materials in the native language. And in order to do this, we've really had to draw upon the expertise of people in the community and in other communities where the language is spoken. And we've interviewed people, taped stories, and then transcribed them in order to produce our books. We have about 30 books now published in the native language, and most of these have been taken down from older people in the community -- stories -- transcribed, and then carefully, very carefully edited to make the written language sound just like the spoken language. There's a special kind of language that's used for telling stories that's different from ordinary conversational Passamaquoddy. And through the efforts of many people working together, we've tried to edit the written material so that it sounds very much like oral story telling in Passamaquoddy.

LEGERE: The books include collections of Passamaquoddy legends, some traditional children stories, and books about Indian activities. And one book tells the story of an Indian's encounter with a white game warden. The books show an attempt to teach more than a language. The Wabanaki bilingual program is also a bi-cultural program. But is it the role of a publicly supported school to preserve a culture? Wayne Newall says yes.

NEWALL: I think it is. I think the public school ought to reflect the community's wishes wherever that community happens to be. In this case, I think that in this community, the community wants things that are dear and real to them, such as their language and their way of thinking and their culture. And I think that that's a part of public education's role is to maintain those kinds of things. And I think very much so that public education has a responsibility because you can't make everybody the same. I think that's been the attempt in the school systems in the United States in the last 100 years, and it's spelling out to be disaster in terms of we might have good mathematicians, but somewhere along the line they drink themselves to death before they're 40, and I'd think that reflects a certain defect in our educational development.

LEGERE: Anna Arnois, one of the native Passamaquoddies who teaches at this school says she herself spoke no English until she started school, when she was forced to learn. Arnois teaches her classes in both Passamaquoddy and English.

ARNOIS: I teach them first in, like for fourth graders, I start teaching them their vowels and their consonants, and their syllables. And then gradually I give them words, you know, for them to study, like spelling. I assign them spelling every Monday. Give them...I pre-test them Thursdays and give them test Friday's.

LEGERE: Is it sometimes difficult to find the right word in the other language, to be able to translate something? I would imagine there are some English words that you don't have in Passamaquoddy, and some Passamaquoddy words we don't have in English.

ARNOIS: Yes, I do. Some words I couldn't translate them into Indian. Like some would say, like how do you say "hello"? And then they'll get you right back, cause I don't know how to say "hello" in Indian.

LEGERE: But..how....What's the Indian greeting? What's the Passamaquoddy greeting?

ARNOIS: Oh gee. (Laughs) The only words I can say would be (Passamaquoddy greeting), "How are you?" That would be the only greeting I can give you.

LEGERE: So Passamaquoddies would not say "hello" to each other, like, like we do in English?

ARNOIS: No, we don't. We just say it in English, "Hello," like that.

LEGERE: How many, how many of the kids are non-speakers in the class?

ARNOIS: Oh, let's see. I got, I think six or seven. You know, they've been living out of state, and they haven't had their Passamaquoddy Language, that's the reason we have these non-speakers here.

LEGERE: When the kids start here, are they fluent in both languages? Can they speak well in both Passamaquoddy and English, or are they stronger in one than the other?

ARNOIS: The English is stronger than the Passamaquoddy.

LEGERE: Is this because it's not spoken so much in the home, or because of TV, or...?

ARNOIS: I think it's because of the TV, and some of them in the homes, especially the...you know where inter-marriage is, and I think that's a problem.

LEGERE: Do they, are they uncomfortable in the class, those who are non-speakers?

ARNOIS: No, they're not uncomfortable, cause I don't give them hard things to do right off. I begin to teach them easy things, so they'll be comfortable. And if they make a mistake, you know, I don't say "You're wrong." You can't say that, you know, "You gotta say it this way." I always tell them, "You're doing fine," but, I'm satisfied. So they're always very comfortable with me.

LEGERE: You are a native speaker of it.

ARNOIS: Yes. I didn't speak English at all when I first went to school, and I had a hard time. Cause, you know, when we don't...we was just sitting there looking at the, you know, one of the nuns. She'll be talking English and we'll, we'll try to understand. And then, of course, she can't

help us, cause she can't speak Passamaquoddy. And that's how I learned my English, when I started going to school.

LEGERE: You were forced to learn it.

ARNOIS: Yes. (Laughs) After we found, living today's life.

LEGERE: To Wayne Newall, Anna Arnois' experience proves the need for the bilingual program at Peter Dana Point. Without it, he says, Passamaquoddy would go the way of other native American cultures.

NEWALL: I think it's important for anybody to maintain who he is. It's as simple as...that's a very basic argument. I was born an American Indian, I was born with a language other than English, and I think part of American freedom is the right to be who you are; and the responsibility of the society at large to accept you as to who you are. I think if we try any other effect, which has been tried of course, then we're short-changing the American way of life.

LEGERE: For OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, this is Bill Legere in Bangor, Maine.

BLAIR: That report raises a number of questions: can a school program to teach Passamaquoddy counteract the influence of TV, radio, and our entire culture?; are bilingual programs designed to change a way of thinking, to make people proud, once again, of their heritage?; or, are they just supposed to teach English mastery?

MERROW: Is it the school's role to maintain a culture? Is it a proper use of federal money to promote ethnic and cultural pride?

BLAIR: Dr. Jose Cardenas directs the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio, Texas. He's a leading supporter of bilingual and bi-cultural education programs. John asked him by telephone whether he'd be satisfied with only transitional bilingual programs: that is programs designed to teach English mastery so students can transfer into regular classes quickly.

ARE ONLY TRANSITIONAL BILINGUAL PROGRAMS THE ANSWER?

CARDENAS: No, I don't think that, that there's any advantage in limiting bilingual education programs to the transitional model. In fact, I think it's very disadvantageous to have a transitional model. The Americans value, or should value, other language competence. A native language, I think, is a tremendous asset. It certainly has been an asset for me, and for many other people, and virtually it has been a tremendous liability for those people -- Americans -- that do not speak another language. I think that militarily, politically, socially Americans have been hampered by lack of second language facility.

BLAIR: Dr. Jose Cardenas, Director of the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio, Texas. We'll hear more from him later.

MERROW: Cardenas strongly supports maintenance programs over transitional ones. Cardenas, and many others in the bilingual education movement, fear that transitional programs will lead to the eradication and disappearance of the native language. Once the kids learn English well, they'll find they have little use for their native tongue.

BLAIR: Philadelphia now has bilingual programs in seven different languages. Reporter Liane Hansen went to South Philadelphia High School, to

learn about the largely transitional programs offered there.

MERROW: Here's her report.

BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN SOUTH PHILADELPHIA HIGH SCHOOL

HANSEN: Two years ago South Philadelphia High School became a foreign language "magnet" school, offering supplements to the secondary curriculum in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Italian, Spanish, and French for Haitian-born students. Upon arrival, each student is tested in his or her English abilities, and is then enrolled in as many "English for speakers of other language classes" as needed. Individualized instruction is made available through the newly-established Bilingual Multimedia Learning Center. During fifth period, however foreign-born students study their native language. In these classes, the literature, history, and sociology of a country are the tools used to nurture an appreciation for the culture of the student's homeland.

But according to Binh Tham, a coordinator for the program, who teaches Vietnamese at the high school, obtaining materials often presents a problem.

THAM: The materials in Chinese, for example, now, very few are published in the United States. Now these materials that are published, these are in Red China, or in Taiwan, and sometimes there are the propaganda elements in them. And we don't want to have, you know, politics in this material. In the Vietnamese, for example, we cannot get anything directly from Vietnam right now, since Vietnam does not have diplomatic relation with the United States.

HANSEN: Differences in attitudes and lifestyle, as well as language, often impede the adjustment to a new culture. Sung Choi, who teaches Korean pointed out such a difference.

CHOI: Most of the children are very quiet here, oriental children are very quiet in their classroom work. They usually are very reluctant to express their, you know, feelings, or, so on and so forth, opinions. I encourage to do that, which is a very American way -- Western way.

HANSEN: But a lot of people think that Westerners are too frank, too open, too loud. What kind of support do you get from parents for trying to encourage this?

CHOI: Not very much, frankly. You know, the parents are still much more conservative than their children, their own children.

HANSEN: In recent weeks, the Philadelphia School District has been plagued by major financial woes. It is unlikely that the bilingual programs will be cut if funds begin to shrink, but when schools close, it affects everyone. Pushing those grim thoughts aside, however, the question remains: is the Bilingual Education Program in Philadelphia working? Binh Tham believes it is.

THAM: I believe, so far, it has been successful, and...one, because it is a transition. The students come in and find that he's not isolated, that there are people who understand him; and even if he can not communicate in English, he still has someone else that he can talk to and learn something. My daughter, for example, when she first came here, she didn't know a word of English, and we were in northwest Philadelphia where there were no other Vietnamese. So she was put in a class with, you know, herself as only Vietnamese. She cried every because she could not understand the teachers, she could not talk to anyone. So when I came here and I see there are students who came from Italy, or from Korea who didn't know a word of English; but then

he feels much better when he finds that there are not only Korean students he can talk to, but there is a Korean teacher where he can talk to with any difficulty he has. And so I think that helps a lot when the students first came to this country. And then he feels that he can be proud of his own culture.

HANSEN: For National Public Radio, this is Liane Hansen in Philadelphia.

MERROW: Do Bilingual Education Programs work? Remember, the original goals were better student performance, and a lower dropout rate. Some advocates have another goal which educators might call "positive self-concept."

BLAIR: It means feeling good about yourself, which is, in fact, a goal of many programs.

MERROW: Most of the local project people we've talked to say their programs are successful, which shouldn't come as a real surprise. Their own local evaluations called "case studies" usually agree. However, large-scale evaluations which compare bilingual programs to regular programs don't back up the conclusions of the local case studies. Most big studies usually show no significant difference between bilingual programs and regular programs, or they reveal that students in the special programs do worse than those in regular programs.

BLAIR: But the research itself, local and national, may not be reliable. Experts tell us that the research in bilingual education has been inadequate and generally lousy.

MERROW: That may be changing. The preliminary report of a major study of bilingual education just came out. That study was done by the American Institutes for Research -- AIR -- in California, and paid for by the U.S. Office of Education. I asked Noel Epstein what the AIR evaluation says.

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH STUDY

EPSTEIN: Well, if your question is about English ability, and that's only one of the questions, the AIR reports shows that the students within federally sponsored bilingual programs were doing less well, or as similar, or as comparison as Hispanic-American students in regular programs: that they were learning English not as well as Hispanic background students in regular programs.

MERROW: Well now, one of the other points -- the goals -- of a bilingual education program has been to make kids feel good about school, to stay in school, in effect, not to drop out. How about, how do they do in that?

EPSTEIN: Again, there are very discouraging results in the AIR study. That the students have very little...their attitude toward school is scarcely different from students who were not from, again, comparison Hispanic students who are not in bilingual programs. The report itself seems to show, quite frankly -- if you had to conclude anything from it -- that the...so far, bilingual education federally sponsored has made little or no difference in the education of the students. The...I must put one positive note in there. In math, the students in the bilingual program seem to be doing -- or were doing -- somewhat better than the students who were not -- the comparison students -- who were not in bilingual programs. In English, they were doing more poorly.

I did not say the bilingual program was a failure, or that we could judge from the AIR report that the bilingual program was a failure. I

said it leaves things as uncertain as ever. It could be due to -- in part at least -- the poor teachers, poor teacher training. It could be due to lack of -- in part -- unavailability of proper curriculum.

BLAIR: Noel Epstein, author of Language, Ethnicity, and the Schools.

Michael O'Malley, Acting Director of the Multi-Cultural Bilingual Division of the National Institute of Education, feels that the negative results of the AIR study be taken with a grain of salt, because the research itself was flawed. John talked with him recently.

MICHAEL O'MALLEY

MERROW: Let me see if I can summarize: the AIR report is essentially negative. It says that it doesn't seem to make much difference in outcomes. Academically, the kids who are not in bilingual programs do just as well... the Hispanic kids who are not in bilingual programs are doing just as well as the kids who are in the program. You're saying, well you can't say that because the groups aren't comparable. The AIR report says, it doesn't make much difference in how the kids feel about school; kids who are not in bilingual programs feel about the same as the kids who are in bilingual programs. You make the same point: the groups weren't comparable, you can't make that statement. And you're also going on to say, to criticize the definition of maintenance programs. When AIR says these are maintenance programs, you're saying, wait a minute, there's no way you can say that definitely; and you're also suggesting that five months between the pre-test and the post-test really isn't long enough, and you don't know enough about the prior history of the kids to draw conclusions. You're really saying, well all those negative things that AIR said, let's not take them too seriously.

O'MALLEY: That's true. I'll point out something very interesting about the AIR study that I found, which is that in the Title...the non-Title VII classrooms, more kids were found to transfer out of those programs for one... out of the non-Title VII programs for one reason or another. Now, saying that more kids stayed in the Title VII programs over the five-month period of time. Now, when you make comparisons between the two groups -- the Title VII and the non-Title VII programs -- if you reach the conclusion that the Title VII classrooms aren't performing any better, and may in fact be performing worse, you may be able to attribute that difference to the attrition rates, as to the fact that there was a lot more movement out of the non-Title VII programs. Mainly because, it's possible, that the kids who did the most moving were the kids from the bottom end of the scoring distribution. So if you take away all the kids at the bottom end of the score distribution -- they move out of the non-Title VII classrooms -- you make a comparison after five months and what have you got? You've got the non-Title VII classrooms looking better than the Title VII classrooms. I'll point out that in only one case, and I think it was in grade four, where the attrition rates comparable for the Title VII and the non-Title VII classrooms. At that grade level, very interestingly, the performance of the Title VII kids was superior to the performance of the non-Title VII kids.

BLAIR: Michael O'Malley, Acting Director, Multi-Cultural Bilingual Division, the National Institute of Education in Washington, D.C. Although he's critical of some of the research methods, O'Malley feels that the AIR study is a major improvement over past research.

MERROW: Dr. Jose Cardenas has a different view of why evaluations of bilingual education are negative: the programs haven't been set up properly, or funded adequately. I asked him by phone whether bilingual education was

successful.

WHY BILINGUAL PROGRAMS ARE NOT SUCCESSFUL

CARDENAS: We don't know. The federal government has done a very bad job of implementing bilingual education programs. Every study that has been conducted of bilingual education indicates that we still don't have a bilingual cadre of teachers to implement the program; we have not provided sufficient and adequate training for teachers going into bilingual education; we have not supplied the teachers with adequate materials for implementing programs. So I think it's really asinine to judge the success of bilingual education programs when bilingual education programs have not been implemented in a satisfactory manner.

BLAIR: Dr. Jose Cardenas, Director of the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio, Texas. Cardenas and Noel Epstein don't often agree, as you'll hear, but one thing they do agree on is the need for teacher training.

NEED FOR TEACHER TRAINING

EPSTEIN: There's a very serious question about the abilities of teachers in bilingual programs across the country, not just in the ones studied by AIR. One of the objectives, from the legislative end of the Bilingual Education Act that is, has been to train bilingual teachers, and to develop bilingual curricula. A very poor job has been done in both areas, from all the evidence. I'll give you one example that I site in the study: in New Mexico, last year, the state did a study -- a random sample. They studied a random sample of, I believe, 136 bilingual education teachers and aides in New Mexico. They tested them with a third grade curriculum in Spanish from Mexico. Only 10% of the teachers could read or write Spanish at the third grade level -- and the aides -- and many of these teachers -- a good number of them, I don't know exactly how many, but many of them -- had been, had gone through special instruction at the graduate school level in bilingual education. That's just one indication of the atrocious level of training.

BLAIR: Noel Epstein, author of Language, Ethnicity and the Schools

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BLAIR: Almost from the beginning, there's been real confusion over whether the public schools were required to provide bilingual education: that is, whether non-English-speaking students have a constitutional right to instruction in their native language.

MERROW: The answer may not end the confusion, but let's try. No, student's do not have a constitutional right to bilingual education, but schools must do something special to help students whose native language is not English.

BLAIR: The Supreme Court ruled in the Lau Decision in 1974, that the public schools in San Francisco were denying equal access to Chinese students because the schools were ignoring their language problems.

MERROW: The Supreme Court said, in effect, "Do something special," but it did not say that the something special had to be bilingual education.

BLAIR: After that decision, the Federal Office for Civil Rights in HEW, issued a memo, known as the "Lau Remedies" memo, and sent it to over 300 school districts where sizable numbers of non-English-speaking students were, apparently, not getting the "something special" the court required.

MERROW: But here's the catch: all of the "Lau Remedies" listed were bilingual education approaches, and the memo told the school districts to adopt one of these remedies unless they can prove that their own approach -- say special tutoring, or in English as a second language approach -- would be just as effective.

BLAIR: Bilingual education's critics find that last notion especially hard to swallow. "How can you prove something is equally as good as something else, that nobody has proved the worth of. That's a logical dead end. And the critics add, the so-called guidelines are much more than suggestions, they amount to marching orders.

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BLAIR: Title VII -- the Blingual Education Act -- now ten years old, the Supreme Court's Lau decision, and the Office for Civil Rights memo,all have had an effect. Today, more than 20 states, and the District of Columbia, are spending their own funds on bilingual education programs. Tom Looker has a report on Connecticut and Massachusetts.

BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN NEW ENGLAND

CHILDREN: (Singing in Portuguese.)

LOOKER: Children in a Portuguese bilingual classroom in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts law requires that a school district institute a transitional bilingual program, if there are 20 or more non-English-speaking children from a single language group. Last year the state appropriated $4 million to pay the cost of bilingual education for some 15,000 students. The actual bill ran to $6 million, and the extra $2 million was picked up by local tax payers -- not without a certain amount of resentment.

But Massachusetts has had its state-wide bilingual education law since 1972. It's the only one fully functioning in New England. Partly because the law is expressly transitional, and partly because the numbers of non-English-speaking students are comparatively small and are spread throughout the state, bilingual education has not become the acute political issue in Massachusetts that it has in some other states.

WOMAN: None of the parents have ever questioned, you know, the bilingual program in this school. They all seem to realize that they're members of one big happy family.

LOOKER: Connecticut recently became the second New England state to pass a state-wide bilingual law, following three years of controversy. The Hispanic community in Connecticut is comparatively large, and it's concentrated in a few cities. Bilingual programs have been functioning for some years in a dozen communities in the state involving about 8,000 students, and all funded by local school districts and by federal money, such as Title VII grants. The debate over state-wide bilingual education in Connecticut was partly a debate between transitional and maintenance philosophies. The board of education in the city of Hartford has already declared that the goal of its school system is to create a maintenance type of bilingual program, with courses being offered equally in both Spanish and English.

Political realities being what they are, however, the state legislature passed a transitional law in Connecticut, similar to the one in Massachusetts.

TEACHER: (Speaking in Portuguese). The other day we were saying this

poem, all right? We love the USA.

CHILDREN AND TEACHER: We love the USA.

TEACHER: When we say love, in Portuguese it means "amar," all right? What, what does love mean in Portuguese?

CHILDREN: Amar.

LOOKER: Portuguese have been settling in New England ever since the whaling days of New Bedford. In Massachusetts, some 4,000 Portuguese-speaking students are enrolled in the state's bilingual education programs, second in number to Spanish speakers. I visited a Portuguese bilingual program at a school here in Springfield, Massachusetts. Bilingual education students here cost an average of $600 more per pupil than regular students. In the Portuguese program, it's necessary to import some books from Portugal or Brazil, but many materials have been developed by the teachers themselves. At the Indian Orchard Elementary School, two teachers work with about 40 Portuguese-speaking students, from kindergarten through grade 4. The bilingual teacher conducts her classes in Portuguese. She helps her students maintain their intellectual development in reading, social studies, and other subjects, while the English as a second language teacher -- the ESL -- helps the kids transfer their learning skills into their new language. Students are not supposed to remain in the bilingual program for more than three years, according to state regulations; but in practice, there's some flexibility about this.

The bilingual and the ESL teachers work closely together, and there are no rigid rules about which language is spoken when. Every so often, the ESL teacher, Lucile Parchick, will measure the English comprehension of her class by having them translate some English text back into Portuguese.

PARCHICK: But when we're talking about where men are free, we're talking about...(speaking Portuguese).

Some of those words, they have never learned them either in school or at home. For example, the word proud, they found it very difficult to express the word proud. The word liberty too, and where men are free. So things that are abstract, I have to translate into Portuguese.

LOOKER: Being different can cut both ways, particularly for children. It can be a source of strength and identity; but it can also be a stigma, separating you from your peers.

STUDENT: Some of the people think that it's corny.

STUDENT: They don't like them, and they call you names and all that. Then they don't be your friend, they beat you up all the time, and they call you "porkchop."

LOOKER: Porkchop!

STUDENT: I know a girl that is Portuguese, and they...the kid that lives across from my street always says, "Portuguese bug, Portuguese bug!"

LOOKER: Why do you suppose that the people call the people from...who speak Portuguese names?

STUDENT: Cause they think they stink a lot.

STUDENT: They think they start fights and stuff.

LOOKER: What do your friends who speak English think about the fact that you speak Portuguese.

STUDENT: He think you don't 'stand me. You don't 'stand me.

STUDENT: He doesn't understand us?

STUDENT: Yeah.

LOOKER: And how do you think that makes them feel?

STUDENT: That they think we are crazy.

LOOKER: Whether these children will maintain their Portuguese after their three years in the bilingual program will depend on more than their teacher's injunctions, or the attitudes of their English-speaking peers. State legislation presently allows parents to request language and culture programs at the high school level, and the law may soon be expanded to include elementary schools. But there are some local districts which resist the whole idea because of costs.

However, in the final analysis, the unanswered question in Massachusetts remains the big one that we started with: how much cultural diversity can Americans really tolerate? And only time will tell how far the people in Massachusetts will go in nurturing cultural and linguistic differences among their school children. For OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, I'm Tom Looker, reporting from Springfield, Massachusetts.

BLAIR: Wisconsin is another state with a new law requiring bilingual education, particularly for children of migrant workers. The law calls for transitional programs; but, in fact, that's the language that nearly every law uses, and it doesn't necessarily mean that there won't be maintenance programs.

MERROW: Louise Strasbaugh reports.

BILINGUAL PROGRAMS IN WISCONSIN

STRASBAUGH: Most bilingual students in Wisconsin are from settled out migrant families, forced out of the migrant stream by mechanization. The state is encouraging migrants to settle in urban areas like Milwaukee and Madison. Recently, Wisconsin passed a law to provide a bilingual program wherever there are ten non-English-speaking students in one high school, or one school district.

Milwaukee, up till last year, has been the only Wisconsin city to have an on-going bilingual education program in their schools. All other cities, including Madison, are just getting programs off the ground. The thrust of the bill is to "mainstream" bilingual students as fast as possible into a total English-speaking environment. Suggestion is the key approach in the bill: school districts are encouraged, but not ordered, to include bi-cultural activities for both mono-lingual and bilingual students. The bill mandates instruction in reading, writing and speaking the English language, as well as using the native language for other subjects from grades K through 8. Bilingual education in grades 9 through 12 is optional.

The transitional approach inherent in the Wisconsin law troubles some bilingual educators. Some feel the social needs of non-English-speaking students are neglected, especially those related to changing from migrant culture to a city environment. There are problems with the language of

the bill. It uses the phrase "limited English-speaking students," which may have negative connotations in the minds of parents considering a bilingual program for their children.

NELIA OLIVENCIA: is Assistant Dean of Students, and Coordinator of Multi-Cultural Affairs at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. She was contacted by the State Department of Instruction and the Madison public school system to notify parents of bilingual programs, a requirement of the bill. She says there is a lack of understanding in both parents and educators minds about how to implement a bilingual program in schools.

OLIVENCIA: It almost seems as if we came in the back door, initially. We were asked to help recruit people into the program when they realized -- or Madison public schools in this case -- realized that they were not achieving the response that they assumed they would. Ok? Well, my point, I guess, is that in the first place they didn't issue, they did not organize a concerted effort to achieve that kind of response, ok, that was needed. So here it was April, and I think the deadline to cert...you know, notification, I think was by April 1st. And when they found out...it was getting close to April that they weren't getting the response that they needed to bring about their program....They had already hired all the staff by the way, and they had chosen the books, but they had neglected to achieve what was most necessary for them to get such a program going. It didn't make any sense to me. It seemed like very poor administrative judgment.

STRASBAUGH: Nelia Olivencia, Wisconsin has had migrant workers come to pick apples and cherries for at least ten years. They make up the bulk of non-English-speaking people in this state. They are only now becoming a part of Wisconsin communities, and a good bilingual program is crucial to any integration of English and Spanish-speaking cultures. The problems with the bilingual bill have had positive side affects: the Latino community is organized to improve the weaker provisions. But actual changes in the law seem to be down the road. Nelia Olivencia thinks the attitude of legislators is to maintain the assimilation approach as long as possible.

OLIVENCIA: One of the first things that I remember was that one man said, "Well, you know, my"-- whatever -- my great grandparents, or, you know, great, great-somewhere-back-in-time, "they came here and they learned English." And part of it is, I guess, a philosophy that we do not believe in keeping differences alive. That part of...it seems, it almost seems like a precept, a premise for becoming an American citizen is that you have to lose any ties that you have with any other culture, or any other language, or any other way of life. And, I think that's ironic in view of the fact that we are constantly referring to our pluralistic society. Now, in 1977, I think -- again, that's just a general observation on my part -- that we're going into another isolation policy in this country. Our attitudes are becoming narrower.

STRASBAUGH: Nelia Olivencia for OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, this is Louise Strasbaugh in Madison, Wisconsin.

BLAIR: California has, perhaps, as many as 500,000 children whose first language is not English. They're mostly Spanish, but they also include Vietnamese, Chinese, Portuguese, Korean, Japanese and other nationalities. Today, about 75,000 students are in special bilingual education programs. Last year, California passed a law making bilingual education mandatory in any school with ten or more non-English-speaking students in any one grade.

MERROW: Eighty per cent of the students qualifying for bilingual education are of Hispanic origin. Audrey Barton talked with Patricia Frank who teaches reading to students who don't speak any English.

FRANK: (Asking a question in Spanish)

STUDENT: (Responding in Spanish)

FRANK: (Asking a question in Spanish)

STUDENT: (Responding in Spanish)

FRANK: (Asking a question in Spanish)

STUDENT: (Responding in Spanish)

FRANK: I'm teaching him to read in Spanish, because they can't read in any language. In Spanish we have five vowels, and they learn their vowels, and then we introduce consonants. Once they get that concept, they have to name the consonant, then name the vowel -- the program moves very fast. They should learn to read in seven months. It's, it's so fantastic to see how they learn so fast.

BARTON: English instruction begins after the children have learned to read their own language. Rosemary Gaugh teaches such a class.

Their level of English is zero, and this class meets for one hour on a daily basis, so they can learn the basic reading skills.

What is that? Repeat, what is that

STUDENTS What is that?

What is this?

STUDENTS: What is this?

What are those?

STUDENTS: What are those?

What are these?

STUDENTS: What are these?

BARTON: Cathy Roach teaches a mixed class: some children speak no English at all, and some of them are bilingual.

ROACH: What we are trying to do at this time is to develop their own language skills in English, while at the same time continuing their growth in their own native language

(Speaking to the Students in Spanish, asking them to repeat what she is saying in Spanish)

STUDENT: (Repeating Spanish phrases)

ROACH: Ok.

MERROW: Reporter Audrey Barton sat in on those bilingual classrooms in California.

BLAIR: California is one place where bilingual education and attempts to desegregate the schools may come into conflict. Many in the Hispanic community in Los Angeles, for example, fear that court ordered desegregation will separate Hispanic students, and reduce the number of bilingual programs, resulting in fewer jobs for Hispanic teachers. Some parents would prefer all, or nearly all Hispanic schools with good bilingual programs.

MERROW: Dr. Jose Cardenas, however, told us that there doesn't have to be a conflict. Go ahead and desegregate he said, then set up the bilingual programs.

BLAIR: We mentioned earlier that Cardenas and Noel Epstein, author of Language, Ethnicity and the Schools disagree about just about every issue in bilingual education. Epstein favors what are called "immersion programs," which put very young children in an environment where the new language is spoken almost exclusively. Cardenas scoffs at immersion techniques, saying they were tried and failed 30 or 40 years ago.

MERROW: Epstein is also critical of what he calls "affirmative ethnicity," and questions whether it's proper for the federal government to support one ethnic or cultural group over another. Cardenas responds that the government has always supported the dominant, Northern European, white, Anglo-Saxon culture, and it's about time other ethnic groups got their share.

BLAIR: First, Noel Epstein.

NOEL EPSTEIN VERSUS DR. JOSE CARDENAS

EPSTEIN: Dr. Cardenas is among those who, I believe, mislead his own people, or those within the movement itself. He's mistaken, and he knows that he's mistaken that immersion bilingual programs are not a return to anything old. Dr. Cardenas, himself, had a bad experience in school: he was not put in a special program of any kind, he was -- at least not that I know of. He, like many other Hispanic Americans, were thrown into English-speaking classrooms -- or some of them actually were put in separate Mexican, "Mexican" schools. There was a great deal of segregation and possibly still is in the Southwest.

MERROW: Cardenas is saying, though, that it's, it's unfair to judge... to say whether or not bilingual education works because he says most bilingual education programs are really ESL -- English as a Second Language Programs. He said they're very few transitional bilingual education programs; there's an insignificant number of maintenance programs, and they're really token.

EPSTEIN: You know, I said in my study it's unfair to judge. I said the same thing he did. I didn't judge whether they work or not -- transitional, bilingual education. I said that matters are as uncertain as ever, and given that certainty parents should have...

MERROW: Why, why such a strong response to your study. Why, why such criticism like...?

EPSTEIN: Oh, because I raised some questions and doubts quoting people within the movement. Mind you, these are not my own inventions. Most of the people in my study are bilingual, bi-cultural advocates, and most of the peoples' points I've made in this...most of the points are the points of bilingual, bi-cultural advocates. I've raised some doubts about forcing school districts to do one kind of program, even though nobody knows whether it makes any difference to the children.

BLAIR: Next, Dr. Jose Cardenas.

CARDENAS: I have discussed these things with Noel Epstein on, on many, many occasions, and I think he reacts as if he had blinders and pursues the same erroneous criticisms in spite of the fact that he has been corrected on many, many occasions.

MERROW: Where specifically do you think he is wrong?

CARDENAS: He's wrong in many, many places. I think the big error that he makes is that he, he describes what he calls "affirmative ethnicity," and that the purpose of bilingual education programs is to strengthen the political power of minority groups, to create allegiances to an ethnicity that is un-American.

MERROW: He says he's been told that by many people in the bilingual education movement.

CARDENAS: Well, he may have been told by any number of people. I still think it's erroneous. He has also been told the contrary by many, many people in the bilingual education movement, and he certainly favors the criticism which he makes about the "affirmative ethnicity," and he gives no service to the criticisms that are made that, that bilingual education programs and multicultural programs mean the inclusion of the culture of many ethnic groups, rather than preserving the culture for, exclusively for Northern Europeans.

American books and and materials, and methodologies reflect a certain ethnicity or certain cultural orientation.

MERROW: Even if they say they're not?

CARDENAS: Well, nobody denies it, except Noel Epstein.

BLAIR: Dr. Jose Cardenas, Director of the Intercultural Development Research Association in San Antonio, Texas.

MERROW: Maybe the most compelling question, especially as the Congress makes ready to rewrite the bilingual education legislation, is the federal role itself. Bilingual education began as a demonstration program, and when should a demonstration cease, and leave it up to others to carry on.

BLAIR: The General Accounting Office--the investigating arm of Congress--has questioned whether the bilingual program has already stopped being a demonstration program, and become a service program. Noel Epstein says his research leads him to conclude that most decisions about the program are political, and that Hispanics feel bilingual education is their program and should be increased. They want a larger share of the federal pie.

HAVE BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS BECOME POLITICAL?

EPSTEIN: To a large degree, it's been governed by politics. Everybody wants their dollars, every school district; certainly minority groups want money, obviously, from the federal government. And money has been distributed hastily to a lot of school districts.

MERROW: Now you quote one bilingual education advocate saying -- and this is a paraphrase, but it's pretty close -- saying this is our money, the blacks can't touch it. Now you site that as an indication of the politics. Explain what you mean.

EPSTEIN: The person I quoted there was Manuel D. Fierro,who used to be the head of El Congresso, which was the umbrella lobbying group for Hispanic Americans in Washington. Hispanic Americans had deep resentments about not getting their fair share of federal aid during the civil right...

MERROW: Are you saying fair, fair share with tongue in cheek?

EPSTEIN: No. They felt, they felt that they didn't get significant attention or money under the anti-poverty program of the '60's, and they... many of them did, at least, I hate to generalize about all of them. Manuel Fierro, in particular felt that way, felt that the civil rights' movement has been a "black-white movement" and that Hispanics have been ignored too much, and that -- one of the things he said to me and that I quoted him was that in this...the bilingual funds, the bilingual program was a way to get money for the Hispanic community, and that -- as he said -- "the blacks can't touch it."

MERROW: I think the bottom line in your own study -- and it's a statement you make a number of times in it -- is your question about the federal role.

EPSTEIN: I think that the federal role should be to make sure that special attention is given to students who have little or no command of English, but that the choice of approach in the schools should be given to individual parents.

MERROW: What you're saying, in effect, is schools should tell people about ethnicity, all of us should learn about everybody else; and what you're objecting to is what you call "affirmative ethnicity," where there's a program set up just to teach me about my type, and you about your type.

EPSTEIN: Yes. I think there's a very important distinction. Historically, the schools have been deeply involved in trying to teach each about every.

MERROW: You're trying to say, let's go back to the old melting pot.

EPSTEIN: No. Heavens no! (Laughs) Please. I...that's a slogan that's terribly abused, so is cultural pluralism, and so is cultural democracy.

MERROW: Well, what should schools be teaching then?

EPSTEIN: I think that schools, certainly, should teach each about every. In other words, you teach the black child about the Hispanic child, the Hispanic child about the Greek child, the Greek child....It should be teaching ethnicity as a subject. It should be teaching the diversity of populations that came to this country, their common problems, their common successes, and many other things about the history of ethnic groups. That I have no question about. I think we should not ignore the diversity of groups in American society. However, historically this country -- and I think rightly so -- has not seen it as a public responsibility to reinforce attachments to ethnic groups or ethnic identities. That's been left to families, religious groups, ethnic organizations, ethnic publications, private schools--parochial schools particularly -- and I think it is the responsibility of the group.

MERROW: Well, the bottom line of what you're...following your logic is that there really shouldn't be any bilingual education program then.

EPSTEIN: No. I said...no, that's not it at all. I have never been an oponent of bilingual education. In fact, I think...I consider myself a very strong supporter of it. I'm an opponent of those who abuse the idea.

BLAIR: Noel Epstein, author of Language, Ethnicity and the Schools.

MERROW: What's the future hold? First, more money. At President Carter's request, the bilingual education budget increased by $20 million: from $115 million to $135 million. Senator Allan Cranston of California has publicly referred to the success of bilingual education because of the number of students it is reaching. He's measuring success in numbers, not in how they perform in school.

BLAIR: Not long ago, a ranking official of the U.S. Office of Education criticized what he called the "false dichotomy between maintenance and transition programs." That's been interpreted as a criticism of Epstein's study. And an Office of Education official said that USOE would probably sidestep the bilingual controversy because "it's not worthwhile to antagonize everyone you have to work with."

MERROW: One positive note, there will be more research and evaluation, more serious attempts to find out what effect bilingual education programs are having.

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MERROW: Material for this program came in part from Bill Legere, WMEH, Orono, Maine; Louise Strasbaugh, WHA, Madison, Wisconsin; Liane Hansen, WUHY, Philadelphia; Audrey Barton in San Francisco; and Tom Looker in Amherst, Massachusetts.

BLAIR: A transcript of this program on bilingual education is available for 50¢. A cassette costs $5.00. Here's the address: National Public Radio -- Education, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this is NPR -- National Public Radio.